



NEWS RELEASE

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Vaulted in History No More

For the first time ever two vaults at Valley Forge National Historical Park, storing more than 1,600 Revolutionary-era items, will be open to the public

Valley Forge, Pa. – Beginning next month visitors to VFNHP will get the story of the American Revolution from a unique standpoint the nature of the weapons and other artifacts with which the war was fought.

"It was the effective use of these weapons that allowed the common soldier of America's War for Independence to eventually achieve American independence," said VFNHP Museum Specialist Scott Houting.

Accumulated over a 20-year period by a Massachusetts historian, George C. Neumann, the collection was jointly purchased by the National Park Service and the Sun Oil Company of Philadelphia in 1978.

The items from the weapons collection consist of four separate, yet related, parts: Firearms; edged weapons that comprise the largest single grouping within the collection; auxiliary edged weapons like pole arms which were spear-point blades mounted on long wooden poles, and bayonets, belt axes and knives. The fourth category includes accoutrements and accessories, like canteens, cooking and eating utensils, bullet molds, bottles, leather cartridge boxes and belts.

"The collection is arranged as a study collection, not only documenting the weapons they carried into battle, but the additional military equipment and personal items common to the Revolutionary soldier," explains Houting. "The items were collected by Mr. Neumann from throughout the eastern part of the country, and it's assumed that some of the equipment was used here at Valley Forge at one time."

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One article of particular interest is a letter dated December 23, 1777, from Gen. Washington to the Continental Congress requesting urgently needed supplies for the encampment to prevent the possible demise of his army.

“I am now convinced beyond a doubt that unless some great and capital change suddenly takes place, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things, starve, dissolve or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can,” wrote Washington in a nine-page letter to then Continental Congress President Henry Laurens of South Carolina.

“This is a unique opportunity for the general public to view the renowned George C. Neumann collection at Valley Forge. The tour will enable visitors to see some of our objects that are not already on display in the Welcome Center gallery said Mike Caldwell, VFNHP Superintendent. “This effort is in concert with our goal of making the collection more accessible to the public both in person and on our web site at nps.gov/vafo.”

Located in the Park’s Welcome Center, tours will be conducted every first and third Saturday at 11 a.m. starting September 15 and will be limited to eight people per group. Cost is \$10 for adults and \$8 for students, seniors and military personnel. Reservations are required and can be made by calling 610-783-1020.

About Valley Forge National Historical Park

Valley Forge National Historical Park is located at Rt. 23 and North Gulph Road in King of Prussia, Pa. It educates present and future generations of Americans about one of the most defining events in our nation's history by preserving the natural and cultural resources that commemorate the encampment of the Continental Army at Valley Forge in 1777-78. www.nps.gov/vafo.

About the George C. Neumann Collection

The collection categorically documents the technological development of 18th century firearms and other weaponry as they evolved both in Europe and the United States. Fulfilling the wish of the original collector, Mr. George C. Neumann, the collection offers a study of 18th century military technological development and how this technology applied to, and transformed warfare of that era.

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